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SUBJECT: HAITI ELECTIONS: SIMEUS VOWS FIGHT TO STAY IN RACE

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Timothy M. Carney for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. Presidential candidate Dumarsais Simeus met with Charge d'Affairs Carney on October 18 to discuss his campaign, the controversy regarding his dual nationality, and the general status of elections preparations. Simeus judged that the Supreme Court had settled the issue of dual nationals' eligibility to run for office in Haiti by ruling in his favor: he would fight "with his life" further efforts to exclude him. The registration process had been successful enough to legitimize the elections but the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) was incompetent and should be "fired." Though the Charge stressed that the U.S. could not take a position on Haitian legal matters, Simeus asked for U.S. support in forcing the Prime Minister to accept the Supreme Court's decision in to re-instate his candidacy. End. Summary.

2. (C) In light of the Haitian Supreme Court's unanimous ruling, Simeus declared he would fight any attempt to keep his name off the ballot with all his available resources. Simeus claimed that most Haitians did not care whether a candidate is a dual national, and that he was steadily gaining support among Haiti's masses. He warned that further moves by the Interim Government of Haiti (IGOH) to prevent his candidacy could derail the elections.

3. (C) The Charge congratulated Mr. Simeus on the decision of the Supreme Court and wished him success in the campaign, but stressed that the U.S. has no preferred candidate. He further pointed out that the U.S. could not intervene in Haitian constitutional dispute. Simeus bitterly denounced the Prime Minister, accusing him of trying to preserve Haiti's failed political culture rather than protecting the constitution. Simeus continued that the PM and his government were themselves "illegal" and only in power as a result of the international intervention. Simeus asked that the USG and the international community press the Prime Minister to accept the Supreme Court's decision approving his candidacy and to cease further actions to prevent him from running. Polcouns reiterated Charge's earlier point that the USG could not take a position on internal Haitian legal matters, but that we continued to urge the IGOH to focus on ensuring that elections took place on time.

4. (C) The Charge asked Simeus whether Haiti could carry off credible elections under current conditions. Simeus believed that with over 3 million registered voters, election results would be credible if the campaign ran smoothly otherwise. (Note: the final tally of registered voters will likely exceed 3.25 million. End Note.) He felt that the CEP had failed repeatedly to meet its obligations and should be "fired" and that the UN should immediately take over the elections process. (Comment. Simeus also made this case at a dinner with other presidential candidates held for visiting S/CRS Director Pascual and WHA/PDAS Duddy. The other candidates agreed that the CEP had failed, but all argued that its role must be preserved. End Comment.) CEP members were pursuing narrow personal and political interests, rather than those of the whole country.

5. (C) Comment: Mr. Simeus called Polcouns the following morning to repeat his request that the U.S. government support the decision of the Haitian Supreme Court and said that his campaign team would "circle back" in Washington to push for this support. Polcouns repeated the message that the U.S. would stay clear of Simeus, personal dispute, but urge the IGOH to maintain its focus on successful elections.

CARNEY